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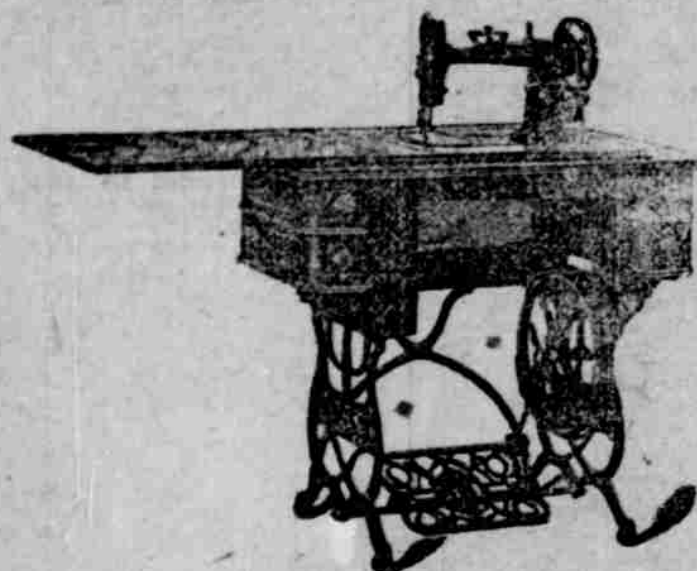
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Li Hung Chang, the "old fox with the gray goatee," as Vizevona, the Italian freebooter, once called him, says the Chicago Times-Herald, is a man whose wealth is reputed to be on a level with that of the Rockefellers, Rothschilds and Vanderbilts, though students of Chinese history will tell you that he could buy up any two of them. In 1840 this representative of a dead nation was a puny orphan boy, working on a rice boat in the marshes of Hwei Ling, where he was born. His life was bounded on all sides by the rice fields.

In 1844 Li Hung Chang, by some freak of fortune that nobody has been able to discover the truth about, reached Canton, and a year later, thanks to the way in which a ragged, friendless beggar lad can seek and obtain an education while the State feeds and clothes him in that "effete" and "barbarous" land, he was admitted to the famous study cells. In 1849, after five years of hard work, he had outstripped all competitors and became secretary to the Viceroy of Kowloon province. In the following year this viceroy led 50,000 men against a rebel uprising. He was killed in action, and Li Hung Chang took his place, pursued the enemy and won a great victory.

In 1851 he was called to Peking and became Secretary of War, and in the ten years following he studied and mastered the whole intricate system of his country's government. The year 1855 saw him still a poor young man, but when he was appointed Governor of Kiang Su he began to accumulate money.

In Kiang Su are the great salt mines of China, and the Governor of the district has the privilege of "farming" the monopoly. Then, too, he began to round up the mandarins in his province. They tried to tell this young, quiet-mannered Governor that they were only earning a bare living out of their fees, but he astonished them by exhibiting complete knowledge of their methods, and soon 50 per cent of their emoluments went into his capacious pockets.

In 1853 came the great rebellion, and General Gordon began his triumphal march against the insurgents, Li Hung Chang, the war genius of the Empire, became his right hand man, and after four years of marvelous success on the field his Emperor loaded him down with more honors and emoluments. In 1856 he was appointed Governor General of the Kiang King provinces, with four viceroys and 1800 mandarins under his orders, and in absolute control of the salt tax, the rice tax, the sampan tax, and the house tax—all infinitesimal charges on the individual—but when one directs the mulcting of 190,000 people it is the fractions that count.

In 1863 his wealth was estimated by foreigners who knew him intimately, to be \$45,000,000. Still he remained in imperial favor, and in 1872 came his culminating triumph, when he was made viceroy of Pe Chi Li, the imperial province, with a palace in the royal city and practically the collection of all the national funds under his control.

Here he developed a peculiar method of semi-moral squeezing. His emissaries visited every province regularly and took good care to guard the mass of the people from extortion at the hands of the mandarins. An officer found guilty of demanding or accepting more than the set amount of taxation was promptly dismissed from his office in disgrace. Li Hung Chang saw that with such an immense population there was no necessity to crush the individual with heavy taxes. He insisted on one-half of every tax being turned into his hands, and one-half of these receipts he turned over in turn to the Imperial treasury, keeping the balance for himself.

There was no false pretense about it. The Emperor, happy in the fact that never before had he found a man who could drag such enormous sums out of the hands of the mandarins, was more than satisfied with the share that came to him, and he knew very well that his minister was dividing equally with him. As viceroy of Pe Chi Li, Li Hung Chang started to build a navy. He let contracts for ships, armament and dock yards, and, beginning to mingle with Europeans in his way, soon came to see a vista of new possibilities for the acquiring of wealth. He was chief promoter, and is today principal owner of the China Merchant Steam Navigation Company, the only native steamship line in existence, with a monopoly of all internal and most of the coast traffic.

The fluctuations in the value of silver gave him a chance for the accumulation of more millions by skillful manipulation of deposits in the great Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, of which he is now one of the largest shareholders. In 1877 the members of the diplomatic corps at Peking presented a memorandum to the Emperor, begging for the establishment of an exact system of coinage. The viceroy told them blandly that he would see about it. He has been seeing about it ever since.

The sale of titles and honors, a recognized perquisite of the Viceroy of Pe Chi Li, was in his hands for several years, and his policy was to charge all the traffic would bear to merchants who were able and willing to pay for handies to their names or the right to wear gold buttons in their caps. In 1894, when he became commander in chief of the Chinese forces, he was "visited" by dozens of contractors, but it may be said to his credit that he listened to none of their advances, possibly because their offers were so small in comparison with his vast wealth that he chose to overlook them; possibly, too, because he wished to give them the idea that he was not a man that could be bought.

In addition to the many sources of revenue mentioned he has had percentages of very large customs duties, the export silk tax, the jade mines and municipal earnings of many cities. No one in the empire can approach Li Hung Chang in the hold he has on the common people of China. They know of his great riches, but they also know that for forty years he has stood between

them and the extortions of petty mandarins. His fortune is an accumulation of mites and atoms.

AMERICAN'S NEW GEOGRAPHY.

In 1890 the census bureau adopted a classification by which the states and territories were separated into five great groups—North Atlantic, South Atlantic, North Central, South Central and Western. In the North Atlantic division were all the states on the country's eastern, seaboard from Maine to Pennsylvania, inclusive. The South Atlantic division covered all the other states on that coast (and West Virginia), beginning with Delaware and Maryland and ending with Florida. The North Central and the South Central division comprised nearly all of the Mississippi valley, except that West Virginia most of which drains into the Ohio, and thus into the Mississippi, was in the South Atlantic division, but the western border of these two big groups did not extend quite as far as the westerly boundary of the Mississippi watershed in the Rocky Mountains. The dividing line between the North Central and the South Central groups was the Ohio river and the southern boundary of Missouri and Kansas. A line drawn along the westerly ends of the two Dakotas Nebraska, Kansas and Texas marked the easterly boundary of the Western division, that group, which was far larger in area than any of the others, covering all the states and territories intersected by the Rocky Mountains, and between them and the Pacific.

Some of these divisions will probably be further subdivided this year, although the census bureau has not yet determined the grouping of 1900. Walter F. Wilcox the chief statistician in charge of the division of methods and results, informs the writer of this article that in certain work done by the bureau recently the two big central divisions have been separated into the Northeast Central the Southeast Central, the Northwest Central, and the Southwest Central, the dividing line being the Mississippi. The Western division, too, will probably have to be separated by a north and south line into the Rocky Mountain and the Pacific divisions, or by an east and west line into the Northwestern and the Southwestern divisions.

The names of these groups of the states and territories tell a thrilling story of geographical, industrial and social expansion.

SERVANT QUESTION

TROUBLES THE WORLD

The scarcity of good servants affects not Honolulu alone. An Englishman just here from London says that there complaints loud and deep are heard and various remedies, more or less practical, have been suggested for the alleviation of the house wife's trouble.

The importation of Chinese servants has been suggested, but this seems a very improbable solution of the difficulty. Of course, the trouble really arises from the extraordinary spread of education during the last few years, and the preference of young women to enter a more independent sphere of action in shops and houses of business than to confine themselves to the cut-and-dried rules of domestic service.

How to obtain good "generals" is undoubtedly a problem which will grow more difficult to solve than it is at present.

In England it may be taken that the average wages of a general servant are about \$75 a year, sometimes more, sometimes less, but this seems a fair price to pay. In France a "bonne-a-tout faire" expects \$60 a year, and a German "magd" a like sum. In Russia, Sweden, Denmark and Norway the average may be put down at \$50 a year, and a like amount is a fair estimate for Italy.

In Switzerland, owing, perhaps, to the enormous floating hotel population, the price rises to \$80, but then Switzerland is naught else but one gigantic hotel for the convenience of travelers. Crossing the Atlantic we find that in the United States of America a good general servant expects \$150 a year, and in Canada about \$10 less. In both instances these sums may be offered freely without obtaining any response, because the same circumstances exist in those countries as in Great Britain—that is to say, the desire for greater independence and a growing dislike to domestic service.

The highest point is touched in the Cape Colony, where a white woman, unless very well paid, considers it beneath her dignity to accept any inferior post. In Natal the average wage is only slightly lower, \$210 a year being a fair figure. Here again the Zulus in domestic service outnumber the white servants by fifty to one.

In our Australian colonies the demand for good servants is great, increasing and forever unfilled. In New South Wales, for instance, the average wages are \$190, in Victoria \$160, which is the standard rate in Queensland and New Zealand; in Western Australia it rises to \$180, and in South Australia, by a curious coincidence, it falls to \$125.

During the honeymoon of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, it is said that the young member of Parliament said to his bride: "Do you prefer to know nothing and to be free of all responsibility, or will you hear everything and be bound to strict secrecy?" Mrs. Gladstone was far too true a woman not to choose the second alternative, and she never betrayed the trust reposed in her—a course which naturally compelled her often to appear indifferent or ignorant of what was going on. Indeed, at one time stories of Mrs. Gladstone's obtuseness were widely current in society. In 1855 an indiscreet lady asked Mrs. Gladstone how her husband was bearing up under the many vehement attacks made on him. "I do not think he is much affected by them," replied Mrs. Gladstone, "for I hear him every morning singing in his bath." "He is like a kettle, then," replied the lady, "which sings when full of hot water"—a retort which, though it may not have pleased the wife of the premier, probably appealed to her sense of humor.

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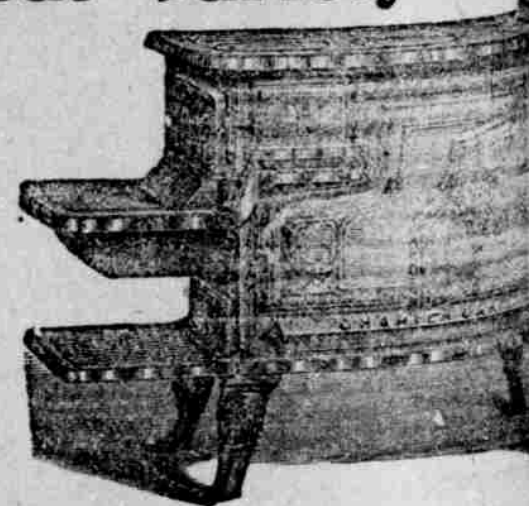
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